

DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST

2011

ANNUAL REPORT



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## DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST — OFFICE CONTACTS & VISITOR CENTERS

[WWW.FS.USDA.GOV/DIXIE](http://WWW.FS.USDA.GOV/DIXIE)

### **SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE**

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#### **ST. GEORGE INTERAGENCY VISITOR CENTER**

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Phone (435) 688-3246

#### **PINE VALLEY HERITAGE CENTER**

*(Open Seasonally)*  
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Phone (435) 574-2463

#### **DUCK CREEK VISITOR CENTER**

*(Open Seasonally)*  
Highway 14  
Phone (435) 682-2432

#### **RED CANYON VISITOR CENTER**

*(Open Seasonally)*  
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#### **ESCALANTE VISITOR CENTER**

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## FOREST SUPERVISOR

### A Note from Rob MacWhorter

The Dixie National Forest had another banner year in 2011. We had important accomplishments in natural resource conservation, supporting community economic development, and improving recreation opportunities. We did not go without some challenges and disappointments as well. We experienced some severe late winter storm damage on all the districts, with Cedar City Ranger District taking the big hit with tree and structure damage to roads, trails and campground infrastructure. Once again the Dixie employees, local contractors and partners excelled at the emergency clean up of approximately 5,000 acres of high use recreation areas and opened access to the forest in a timely manner. On a sad note, the historic Cowpuncher Guard Station on the Escalante Ranger District burned down over the summer. The Guard Station dated back to 1928, and was well utilized in recent years as a recreation rental cabin. Also, for the past several summers the forest has seen several law enforcement actions related to marijuana growing operations on national forest system lands. The success of the multi-agency task force operations to eliminate marijuana gardens in the Dixie National Forest continue to make the forest a safe and enjoyable place to recreate.

In 2011, we had turnover in the forest leadership team and I welcomed new district rangers to both the Cedar City and Powell Ranger districts. I am proud of the great efforts, accomplishments and partnership development put forth by the Dixie National Forest employees. Much of our work relies upon the exceptional partners and collaborative relationships the forest has with the local and state governments, as well as a wide variety of private and non-profit sector partners. Together we are stewards of the Dixie National Forest's 2 million acres of public land. I hope this document will showcase some of the top achievements and accomplishments of 2011, as well as generate partnership enthusiasm to develop additional collaborative efforts in 2012.

*Rob MacWhorter*



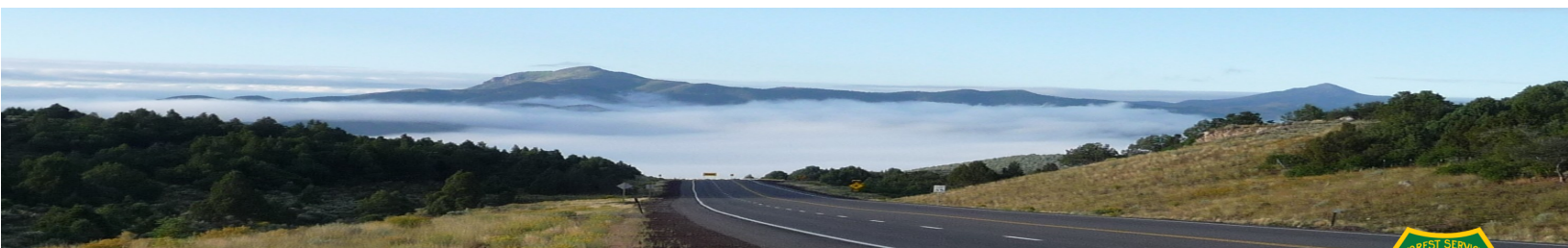
## NATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The national office of the Forest Service has had significant accomplishments in 2011.

- **Safety:** Conducted safety training for almost all employees nationally. Working towards becoming a zero-fatality organization.
- **Inclusiveness:** Diversity is a key feature of many successful organizations. The agency is working to broaden the circle of conservation by tapping into the skills, abilities, and talents of all Americans in the work of the Forest Service.
- **Restoration:** In order to restore the health and resilience of America's forests and grasslands, the Forest Service is expanding community-based stewardship projects, especially those projects that are designed to restore large landscapes.
- **Fire:** Working with our many interagency partners, the Forest Service is working to successfully implement the Cohesive Fire Management Strategy. While increasing our focus on reducing unnecessary risk to firefighters, we have continued to suppress 98% of wildfires during initial attack. In addition, we have picked up the pace of our hazardous fuels treatments to protect communities from large wildfires.
- **Communities:** Nationally, the Forest Service has provided urban/community forestry programs in 8,550 communities. Additionally, in recreation alone, we have supported an estimated 237,800 jobs in rural communities across the nation.

## INTERMOUNTAIN REGION FOCUS AREAS

The Dixie National Forest is one of 13 national forests and 1 grassland in the Intermountain Region (R4) (headquartered in Ogden, Utah). For the past couple years, the region has had five focus areas: water stewardship, workforce pipeline, travel management, range management, and vegetation classification and mapping. In 2011, significant accomplishments were made in all these areas.



## DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST – BY THE NUMBERS

- \$1.2 million in projects funded by the Dixie National Forest RAC.
- Implemented motorized recreation management on 152,529 acres improving 18 miles of stream and lake habitat and over 500 acres of soil and watershed improvement.
- 83,468 people served in the recreation areas and developed campgrounds.
- Approximately \$5 million of multi-year funding used to reconstruct the Pine Valley Recreation Area.
- Received \$780,000 from the Regional Office (Ogden, Utah) to initiate the Escalante Headwaters Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project in 2012.
- \$400,000 and 1,400 acres stewardship agreement with the National Wild Turkey Federation. This is the largest stewardship project to date between the NWTF and the USFS.



Where conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question shall always be answered from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

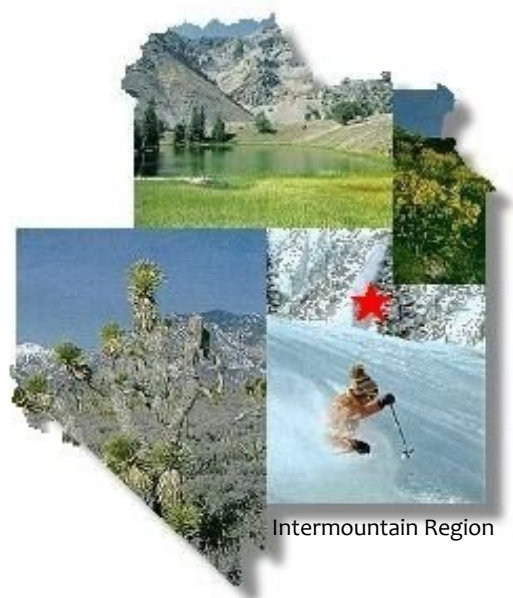
-Gifford Pinchot  
Father of the Forest Service, Chief Forester 1905-1910



- 244 volunteers contributed 19,121 hours, representing \$363,300 of labor commitment to the forest.
- The Fuels program treated 3,217 acres of prescribed fire, 2,681 acres of mechanical treatment, 311 acres of managed wildfire, and 4,235 acres of contract treatment, making a total of 10,444 acres.
- 13.2 miles of new transmission lines permitted by the Garkane Tropic to Hatch Record of Decision.
- Improved recreation facilities and campground ADA compliant sites across the forest from 18% to 38%.
- 35,000 ccf of timber sold an increase of 250% from 2010.
- \$250,000 was contributed to 2,500 acres of habitat improvement and a program to translocation of nuisance Utah Prairie Dogs from private land to public land.

## DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST – BY THE NUMBERS

- 91% of forest was found suitable (with stipulations) for Oil and Gas leasing.
- The Federal Highways Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) program awarded the forest over \$600,000 to repair the Veyo-Shoal Creek Road.
- Implemented Motorized Travel Plan in 3 Implementation Areas: Oak Grove, North Paunsaugunt, and Middle Mammoth.
- \$33,000 More Kids in the Woods grant was awarded to the forest for the Color Country Outdoor Youth Initiative.
- 100,000 seedlings planted in areas for fire restoration and impacts from the spruce beetle epidemic.
- Over 6,500 log outs across the forest using both chainsaw and crosscut saws.

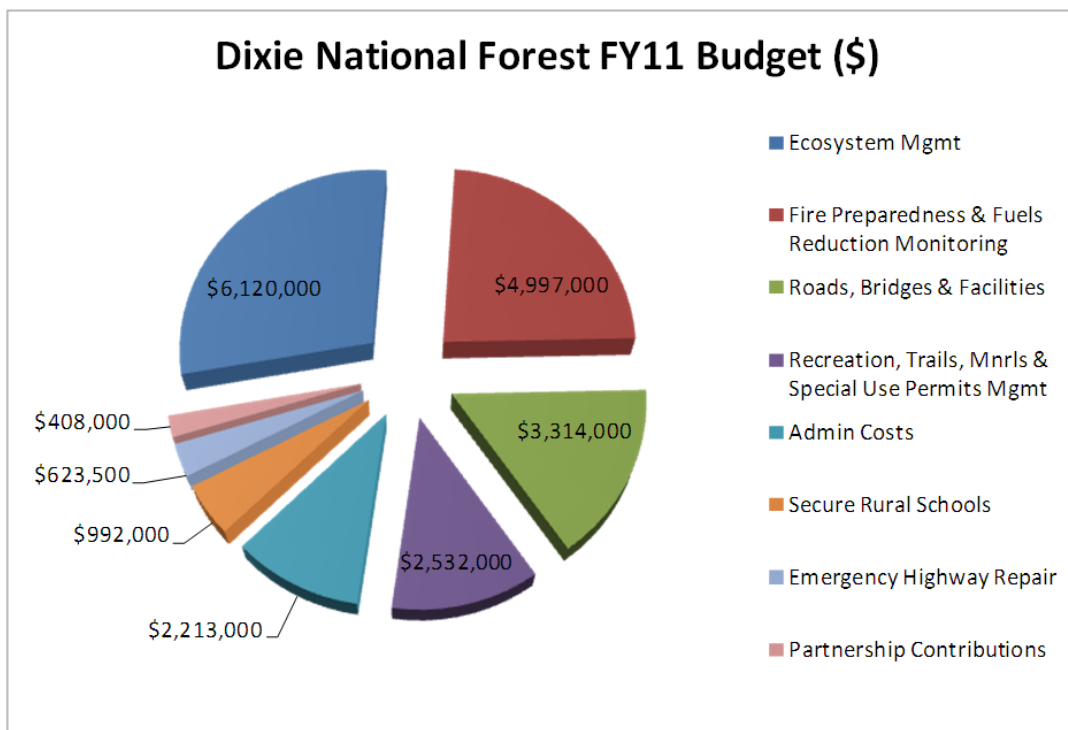
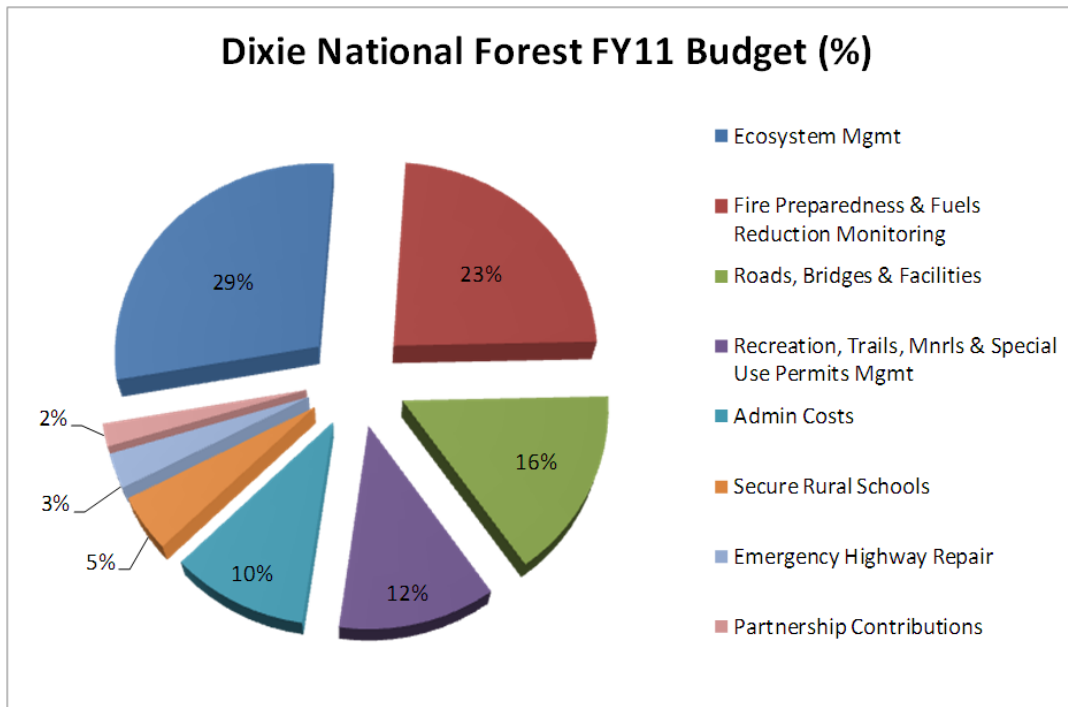


Intermountain Region

## DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST – BY THE NUMBERS

- 166 Permanent employees
- 150 Seasonal employees

Approximately \$20 Million Budget



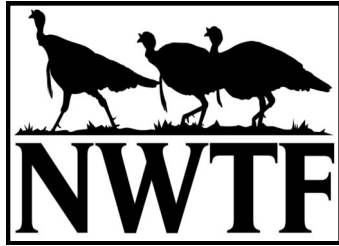


# DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Highlights of the pinnacle accomplishments on the Dixie National Forest in 2011.

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

### ***Dixie National Forest Signs Unprecedented Pockets Stewardship Agreement with National Wild Turkey Federation:***

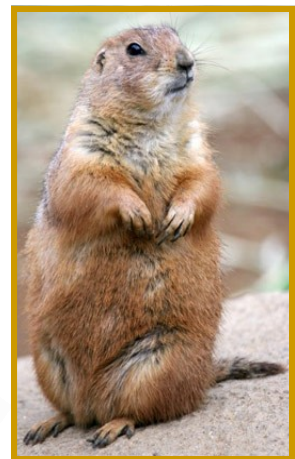


The Dixie National Forest signed a stewardship agreement with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). This stewardship agreement was the largest ever between the US Forest Service and the NWTF. Over the course of the agreement, almost \$400,000 will be contributed by the Dixie National Forest and NWTF to the project that will improve 1,400 acres of aspen and conifer stands on the Escalante Ranger District. The project will foster healthier vegetation conditions and create world-class wild turkey habitat. NWTF intends to utilize the local timber and wood cutting industry to accomplish the work in the agreement. Since 2005, the Dixie National Forest has completed \$1.8 million in stewardship contracts. All of these contracts have gone to local industry.

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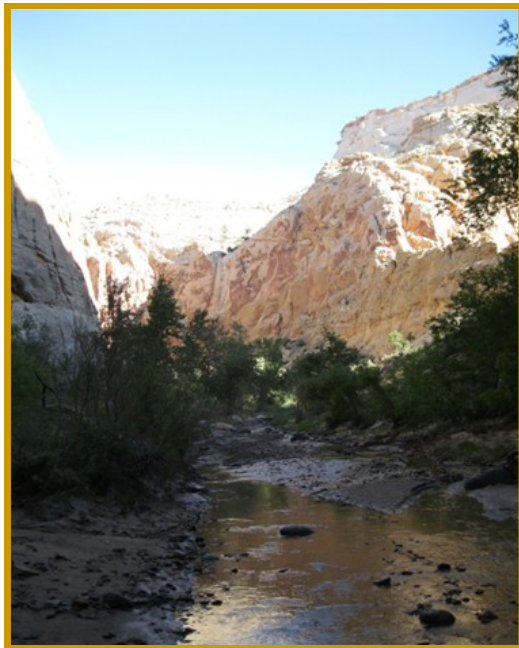
### ***Dixie National Forest Contributes \$250,000 Towards Utah Prairie Dog Translocation and Habitat Improvement:***

The Dixie National Forest has been a partner in trapping and moving Utah Prairie Dogs from private land to public land since the late-1990s. The Powell Ranger District has been working for over 10 years to prepare historic habitat to receive these prairie dogs. With the help of our partners (Utah Division Wildlife Resources, Garfield county, Utah Division Natural Resources- Endangered Species Mitigation Fund, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and private landowners), the Powell Ranger District established five successful translocation sites. One additional translocation site is found on the Fremont River Ranger District, Fishlake National Forest. In 2011, the Dixie National Forest dusted 2,500 acres of Utah Prairie Dog colonies for plague. The Dixie National Forest spent approximately \$250,000 on translocation and habitat improvement projects for 2011. This represents a significant contribution to recovering this iconic species.



### ***Dixie National Forest and Partners Submit Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project for Escalante River Watershed:***

The Dixie National Forest and a wide variety of partners submitted a multi-year, multi-million dollar collaborative forest landscape restoration project for the Escalante River Watershed to the Secretary of Agriculture for consideration in 2011. There are four priorities for the project:



**1) Motorized Travel Plan Implementation:** Implementation of 143 miles of designated routes.

**2) Restoration of Riparian and Wet Areas:** Projects will restore native fish and establish native plants.

**3) Restoration of Upland Vegetation:** Projects will reduce threat of fire, recover areas that have been disturbed by bugs, and restore native vegetation.

**4) Rural Community Stability and Protection:** Projects will support local industry (could support up to 40 seasonal and year round jobs), improve fire protection, and encourage utilization of biomass.

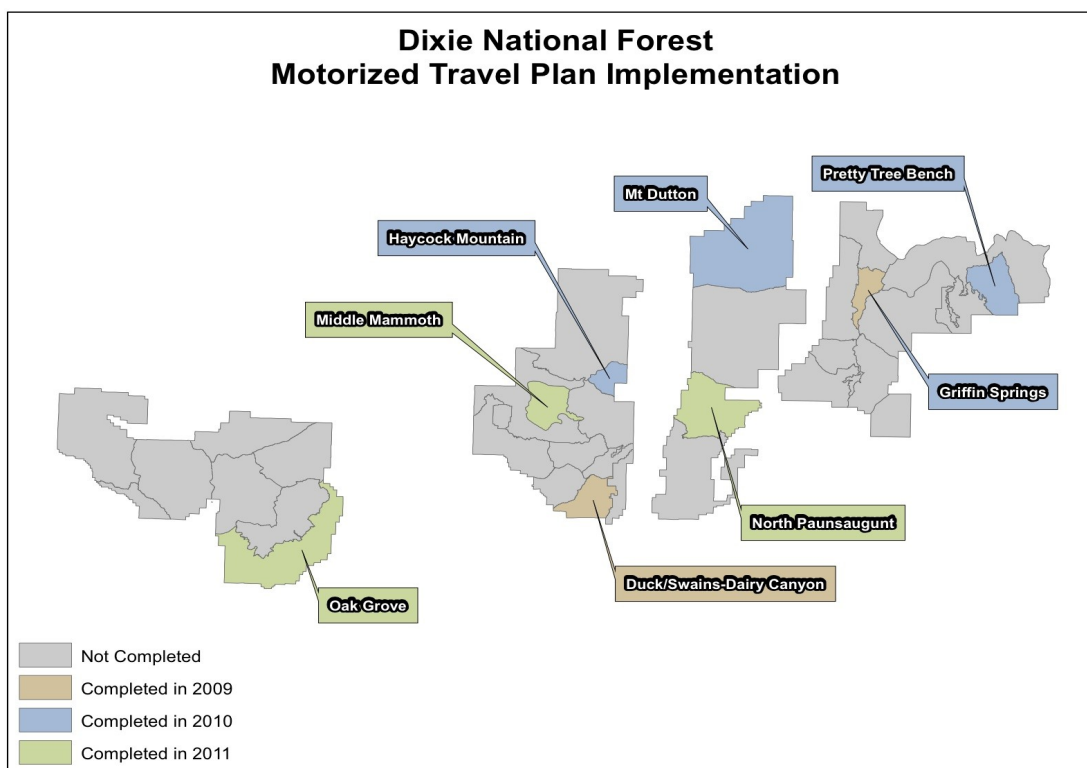
In early 2012, this project was selected for prioritized restoration funding by the Intermountain Region and granted \$780,000 toward project implementation.

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### ***\$1.2 Million in Forest Projects Approved by the Dixie National Forest Resource Advisory Committee (RAC):***

In 2011, the Dixie National Forest Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) – which is made up of 15 community representatives – finished recommending a wide variety of projects that are made possible by the Secure Rural Schools Act. Rob MacWhorter approved over \$1.2 million in projects from the RAC. RAC money went to a wide variety of proponents including the Forest Service, local counties, state government agencies, and non-profit organizations. RAC projects will provide major improvements to forest roads and other infrastructure, community fire protection and conservation for wildlife.

## Improved Habitat through Motorized Travel Plan Implementation:



The Motorized Travel Plan (MTP) Decision was signed by Rob MacWhorter in April 2009. This decision designated 2,700 miles of system roads and trails across the forest. The forest was divided into thirty five Implementation Areas (IA), several IAs have been implemented annually since 2009. From FY09 to FY11 the forest has accomplished implementation on approximately 480,000 acres (approximately 25% of the forest). The forest has decommissioned approximately 400 miles of roads.

The monitoring record of the closures shows a 98% effectiveness rate of the physical management actions on the ground.

In 2011, implementation occurred in the Oak Grove, North Paunsaugunt, and Middle Mammoth Implementation Areas, treating a combined, 152,529 acres. Closure and restoration of the unauthorized or redundant routes has created numerous resource benefits. These treated areas successfully improved 17.67 miles of stream/lake enhancement and habitat. Additionally, 502 acres of soil and watershed resource improvement were accomplished thus protecting valuable water resources.

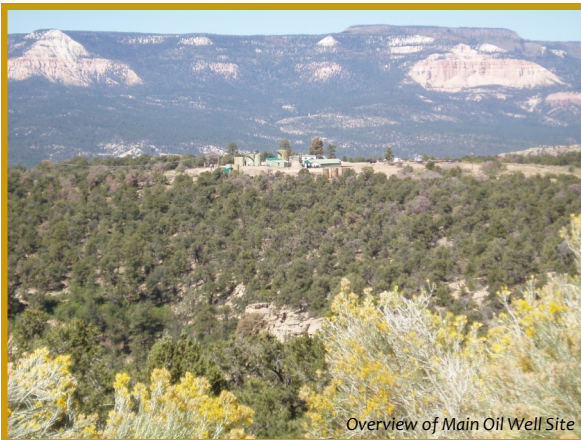
## COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### ***Dixie National Forest Finishes Environmental Analysis and Issues Record of Decision to Allow Permitting for Garkane Tropic to Hatch Transmission Line:***

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Tropic to Hatch 138kV Transmission Line was signed in April 2011. This was a multi-jurisdictional decision process within Garfield County. The ROD will allow Dixie National Forest to issue a special use authorization to Garkane Energy for a 100 foot wide easement on 13.2 miles of DNF lands to construct, operate and maintain a 138kV transmission line. This line would upgrade the existing 69kV line and would remove 13.2 miles of the old line from sensitive sage grouse and Utah prairie dog habitats. The transmission line will increase the reliability and capacity of Garkane's electrical delivery system between the communities of Tropic and Hatch, UT.

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### ***Dixie National Forest Issues Record of Decision for Forest-wide Oil and Gas Leasing:***



The Record of Decision (ROD) issued in August 2011, found 1,478,000 acres or 91% would be available for Oil and Gas leasing opportunities subject to stipulations. The BLM State Director now will decide whether to offer for lease these National Forest System lands and will issue a separate Record of Decision. Neither of these decisions authorizes any surface disturbing activities. These lands will then be included in the BLM quarterly lease sales with

Forest Service review. A percentage of lease sale royalties from public lands are returned to the state and counties of Utah.

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### ***Dixie National Forest Provides Leadership for Three Major Transmission Lines Proposed Across Utah National Forests:***

In 2011, the Dixie National Forest continued to provide leadership for reviewing the environmental analysis for three major power transmission line proposals across public lands in Utah. In 2012, a decision is expected for the Sigurd to Red Butte 345kV transmission line. The other two line projects, Transwest Ex-





press (600kV direct current), and Energy Gateway South (500kV), interdisciplinary team members will be actively engaging the public during 2012. As a contribution to local economic development and community stability, the Dixie National Forest provides project management and leadership to these projects for the Utah National Forests.

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### ***35,000 CCF of Timber Sold on the Dixie National Forest:***



Through the Clayton Reoffer (5,360 CCF), Pockets Stewardship (19,435 CCF), Dry Ridge Stewardship (4,780 CCF) and volume from fuel wood permit timber sales, the Dixie National Forest sold about 35,000 ccf of timber in 2011. This represents an increase of about 250% over the timber sold in 2010. 35,000 ccf is a rough equivalent of wood needed to construct four-six 2,000 square foot houses. The Forest also planted approximately 100,000 seedlings, of Engelmann spruce in areas impacted by the spruce beetle epidemic on the Cedar City Ranger District. Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir seedlings were also planted in wildfire affected areas of the Powell and Escalante Ranger Districts.

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### ***Flood Damage to Forest Roads Repaired:***

In late December 2010, parts of Southern Utah received up to 11 inches of rain, causing widespread heavy flooding. The forest was not immune to the resulting damage. On December 22, scour along the banks of Little Pine Creek destroyed two sections of the Veyo-Shoal Creek Road, a paved route used to access two high hazard dams, the Honeycomb Rocks Campground and a popular area for recreation. Further damage was discovered on higher elevation dirt roads after spring thaws allowed Forest Service personnel to access them. The Federal Highways Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads program awarded the forest over \$600,000 to repair the Veyo-Shoal Creek Road. Emergency repairs were completed by the Forest Road Crew in 2011 and permanent repairs are currently underway and are expected to be completed as soon as temperatures warm up to allow paving.





## RANGE MANAGEMENT

Range management continues to be an important area of work on the Dixie National Forest. The forest administered 76 range allotments in FY11 on 1.6 million acres. Forest staff work with range permittees to improve over 22,000 acres of range land by installing wildlife escape ramps, removing encroaching juniper, replacing old troughs, and clearing ponds in Wild Horse and Burro territories. A coordinated gather of wild horses with the Bureau of Land Management was also completed. Working with community partners the forest treated nearly 1,900 acres of noxious weeds.

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## FIRE and FUELS MANAGEMENT

### *Sunset Campground Interagency Prescribed Fire Help Improve Forest Conditions and Protect Community Resources:*



In August 2011, 45 interagency firefighters, from Bryce Canyon National Park and the Dixie National Forest cooperated to burn 1,106 acres of park and forest land (west of the Bryce Canyon park road near Sunset Campground). The management ignited fire (otherwise known as a prescribed fire) provided better fire protection to the park and forest infrastructure, as well as surrounding private lands and facilities. Additionally, the project was designed to open the forest canopy and forest floor so that there can be regeneration of aspen and ponderosa pine.

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### *Another Successful Year for Managing Wildfire and Administering Prescribed Fire:*



There were 35 natural wildfires on the Dixie National Forest in 2011. Most of these wildfires were managed for immediate suppression. A few small wildfires were managed to achieve forest plan objectives.

During 2011, the Dixie National Forest fuels program treated 10,444 acres. This included 3,217 acres of prescribed fire, 2,681 acres of mechanical treatment, 311 acres of managed wildfire, and 4,235 acres of contract treatment. Together these treatments are improving forest health and helping to protect communities from future wildfire.

## RECREATION and TRAILS

### ***Pine Valley Campground Reconstruction Nearly Complete:***

The Pine Valley Campground reconstruction is a \$5 million dollar Capital Improvement Project that began in 2008, and the final phase of construction will be completed in 2012. Recreation facilities in Pine Valley were originally built in the 1930's to provide for picnicking. Construction of many of the existing facilities occurred in the 1960's with facilities designed to accommodate recreation uses of that era. Recreation facilities adjacent to riparian areas have caused soil compaction, stream bank erosion, loss of vegetation and increased sedimentation into streams. The aging recreation facilities require replacement and upgrading to meet Forest Plan standards, as well as current health, safety, and American with Disability Act (ADA) standards.



The first new sites opened in 2009, these included two new campgrounds and a day use group area. The Dean Gardner Loop (135 people) is designed for RV use and is located adjacent to the Pine Valley Reservoir. The four Thomas Forsyth Group Areas provide day use picnicking for groups composed of between 35 and 150 people. The Mitt Moody Loop (35 people) provides walk-in camping near the wilderness trailheads for those who enjoy a more primitive experience.

Six new campground loops and a new amphitheater were constructed in 2011. The Ebenezer Bryce Loop was designed for those who like to car camp and accommodates up to 85 people. The Effie Beckstrom East (50 people) and West (55 people) Loops were constructed with camping spurs around the outside of the loop and a pavilion with a fire ring in the center. It is perfect for a group who would like to share a night in the woods and meet together for dinner or a fireside. The Crackfoot (130 people) and Yellow Pine (40 people) loops were designed with the RV camper in mind. The Equestrian Loop was redesigned to better accommodate horseback riders planning to access the Pine Valley Wilderness trails. The new amphitheater provides seating for 75 people, power to help with presentations and boasts a scenic view of Gardner Peak.

In addition to camping opportunities the redesigned recreation area provides better access to hikers. Two new trailheads, Mitt Moody and Santa Clara River Walkway, were constructed in 2011, and by fall 2012, a paved accessible walking trail that follows the Santa Clara river as it winds through the Ponderosa, will be open to the public.

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### ***Growing Interest in Winter Recreation:***

2011 was the first year of full operation of the Deer Valley Non-Motorized Winter Recreation Area. Thanks to grants from the Utah State Parks and Iron County, equipment was purchased to provide a fully groomed network of cross-country ski trails, trail signage and maps, and volunteer support from the Cedar Mountain Nordic Ski Club for on-going trail maintenance. Efforts continue to develop more services and facilities, including separate dedicated parking lots and trailheads for snowmobile and non motorized winter trail systems.

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### ***Recreation and Trails Programs Meet the Challenge of a Devastating Winter:***



It was a challenging spring across all of the Dixie NF due to the heavy, wet, and early snow of 2010-2011. This led to an immense amount of tree fall, mostly affecting the denser spruce/fir/aspen communities. Therefore, the focus during the early season was to clear trail and road corridors in order to make them accessible to the public. This was a considerable amount of the total workload over the season's

entirety. There was over 6,500 log outs across forest using both chainsaw and crosscut saws. Tree log out data was collected by ACE (American Conservation Experience) leaders and corps members, using customized log sheets to hopefully aid in the districts future trail maintenance planning.

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### ***More Kids in the Woods Grant awarded to Dixie National Forest:***

A \$33,000 More Kids in the Woods grant was awarded to the Dixie National Forest for the Color Country Outdoor Youth Initiative in support of conservation education programs that will provide local community children more opportunities to experience the great outdoors, learn about nature, and build a lasting commitment to conservation and land stewardship. The Dixie National Forest and a variety of state/local government, federal govern-

ment, non-profit, and private sector partners have developed a series of programs that are designed to engage kids with nature from the time they are first discovering the wonders of nature as young children



with their families to the moment when they are in college and looking at future careers. The Color Country Outdoor Youth Initiative on the Dixie National Forest is a nature-based outdoor education program in southwestern Utah that will be able to accept more students and increase opportunities for middle-school students. This series of More Kids in the Woods programming is reaching hundreds of children and their families each year through the Color Country Natural Resource Camp, Family hiking series, and Cedar Mountain Science camp.

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***Through Partnership and Volunteer Contributions, the Forest Leveraged \$771,299 in 2011:***



In 2011, through grants, partnerships and agreements, forest employees leveraged over \$408,000 in additional work to manage the forest resources. Across the forest, the Dixie had 244 volunteers that were active with forest managers and donated a combined 19,121 volunteer hours at \$19 per hour. The volunteer work completed across the forest had an equivalent cost savings of \$363,300. The forest values the work and relationships developed between the volunteers and forest employees while working side by side in the field. Numerous volunteers return annually to participate in the resource management and recreation projects of the Forest.





## FOREST SUPERVISOR

### Looking ahead to 2012

The year 2011 was a busy and successful year in meeting unexpected challenges as well as delivering great accomplishment in forest resource management and work completed in national focus areas. The value of partnerships and collaboration to achieve forest management goals was solidified. As partners, whether working together toward common goals, or reconciling controversy and conflict, together we care for the landscape of the Dixie National Forest and serve those that rely upon the land for sustainability, economic support and recreation opportunity.

The Dixie National Forest is looking ahead in 2012, to build upon the natural resource conservation efforts, provide vegetation enhancement, deliver quality recreation opportunities and continue to foster working relationships and outreach to potential partnerships.

A preview of some work we expect to accomplish in 2012:

- Offer and sell around 29,500 CCF of timber through commercial and personal use sales. As well as continue vegetation management through the use of Stewardship contracting, with about 1,200 acres offered for sale.
- Dixie National Forest will participate in a pilot budget allocation that will prioritize funds to do landscape restoration on a larger scale by prioritizing landscapes. Through this prioritization the Dixie National Forest will work with partners to do \$780,000 of restoration work in the Escalante River watershed.
- Complete the final phases of the Pine Valley Campground and Santa Clara River Walkway Trail.
- Continued Implementation and Education of the Motorized Travel Plan.
- Record of decision for 345kV overhead transmission line from Sigurd to Red Butte is expected in late summer 2012.

In order to successfully manage the Dixie National Forest it takes collaboration, I look forward to your feedback and how we can continue to create a healthy, sustainable and resilient Dixie National Forest.

*Rob MacWhorter*



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